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fishes; and Jacobi, who was the first to discover (in the course of the last century) the mechanism of fecundation among these fishes, had noted the proportion of twin monsters in fishes' eggs. His observations and those of Lereboullet coincide with the result obtained by M. Dareste, that while external conditions may often determine the formation of simple monsters, they are absolutely without effect in regard to the evolutions of double monstrosities. — *Nature*.

IMPORTATION OF USEFUL INSECTS.—At a recent meeting of the London Entomological Society, Mr. Dunning stated that he had received a communication from Mr. Nottidge, of New Zealand, asking if it were possible to send over humble-bees, in order, by means of cross fertilization, to procure seeds from clover, which plant remained infertile in the colony, failing suitable insect agency to aid its fertilization. It was suggested that by procuring a sufficient number of humble-bees when in a dormant condition, and keeping them in that state (by means of ice) during the voyage, the result might be obtained. Mr. McLachlan mentioned that he had received a letter from Capt. Hutton, from the same colony, stating that indigenous *Aphides* did not, apparently, exist there, but imported species were becoming very destructive, and he asked if it would be possible to import *Chrysopa*.—*Entomologist's Monthly Magazine*, Jan., 1874.

NESTING OF THE PRAIRIE WARBLER IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.—I obtained in northern New Hampshire, at the latitude of Mt. Washington ( $44\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ ), a nest of the prairie warbler, containing four eggs, which differ from all other specimens that I have ever seen. It is also a summer resident there, though Lynn, Mass., in  $42\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  latitude, has hitherto been generally accepted as the northern limit at which this bird breeds.—H. D. MINOT.

### GEOLOGY.

ELDEN HOLE, DERBYSHIRE.—We copy the following abstract from "Nature" of a paper read by Mr. R. Pennington before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, Jan. 26, as of interest in its bearing upon the formation of similar so-called bottomless pits in this country.

"Near the road from Buxton to Castleton, and about four miles from the latter place, stands Elden Hill, in the side of which is

Elden Hole, a perpendicular chasm in the rock, and, like many such apertures, reputed to be bottomless. The author describes a descent into the cavern, made by himself and others, on the 11th of September, 1873. At a distance of 180 feet from the top a landing-place was reached, although not a very secure one, as it was inclined at an angle of about 45°. Thence a cavern ran downwards towards the south or southeast; the floor was entirely covered with loose fragments of limestone, probably extending to a considerable thickness. There was quite sufficient light at this point to enable one to sketch or read. The party then scrambled, or rather slipped, into the cavern for some few yards, during which they descended a considerable distance: it was of a tunnel-like shape; then it suddenly expanded into a magnificent hall about one hundred feet across and about seventy feet high. The floor of this hall sloped like the tunnel, and like it was covered with *débris*. At the lower side they were about sixty feet below their landing-place, and therefore about two hundred and forty feet beneath the surface. The entire roof and walls of this cavern were covered with splendid stalagmitic deposits. From the roof were hung fine stalactites, whilst the sides were covered with almost every conceivable form of deposited carbonate of lime. In some places it was smooth and white as marble, in other places like frosted silver, whilst the rougher portions of the rock were clothed with all sorts of fantastic shapes glistening with moisture. From this cavern no opening of any length or depth was found save the one by which the party had entered it. There can be no doubt, the author believes, that this chasm has been formed by the chemical action of carbónic acid in water, and that it has attacked this particular spot either from the unusual softness of the rock originally situated here, or because there was here a joint or shrinkage in the strata. There is nothing, however, in the position of Elden Hole to lead one to suppose that any stream has ever flowed through it; no signs of such a state of things appear anywhere around. It is not related to any valley or ravine, or to any running water, and there is, as observed, an absence of any well-defined exit for water at the bottom. No mechanical action of a flowing stream can therefore have assisted the process of enlargement. The author thinks it must be due to the gradual silent solvent properties of rain-water falling on the surface, and escaping through jointings and insignificant channels in the hard rocks below. Whether the excavation took place from above or below is uncertain."

### M I C R O S C O P Y .

ATMOSPHERIC MICROGRAPHY.—To the already valuable contributions of Drs. Cunningham and Lewis, who were sent to India by the British government to investigate as thoroughly as possible the causes of cholera and other diseases prevalent there, there